

# The Classical Bulletin

Published monthly except July, August, and September, by St. Louis University. Subscription price: \$1.00 a Year.  
Entered as second-class matter at St. Louis, Mo., Post-Office.

Vol. XX

NOVEMBER, 1943

No. 2

## The American Classical League and Catholic Schools

By JOHN P. CARROLL, S.J.

Jesuit Novitiate, Wernersville, Pennsylvania

I am decidedly happy that the Editor has given me a chance to express my views on the benefit of having more Catholic schools become members of the American Classical League. Certainly, the League is an active, dynamic, and, in the sense explained by Professor Murley, a disinterested champion of the Latin Classics. (*C. B.*, October, 1943)

I would divide my remarks on the subject into two parts, 1) the ponderable good which the League does for American classicists, and 2) its spiritual contribution to their welfare.

The ponderable good the League does for American classicists is incalculable. It provides them, during the school year, with a monthly issue of *The Classical Outlook*, a magazine whose pages are filled with inspiring articles in the field of Latin scholarship, as well as with helpful suggestions for practical betterment of Latin courses, written by those who are actually engaged in that field. No one, I think, would be willing to deny the value of these helps, especially in these days, when, in the welter of the 'practical' courses the war has, perforce, introduced, we all feel we have something in common with Aeneas' companions after the shipwreck and are literally *rari nantes in gurgite vasto*.<sup>1</sup> A second, but by no means subsidiary, good which the League provides is the annual verse-writing contest which it sponsors. This contest is open to all students who are taught by members of the League. In it may be entered original verse compositions, written either in Latin, Greek, or English, on a classical subject. The prize offered is a gold medal for the winning verse in each language, together with publication of all the verses deemed worthy of the honor in *The Classical Outlook*. So far our Catholic schools have done admirably in this contest, and for my own part, I have had abundant opportunity to see the interest it has stirred up among students. Lastly, under this heading, should be mentioned the Service Bureau, whose aim is to supply to teachers some of the 'realia' which are found helpful in the teaching of the classics.

Secondly, on the more spiritual level, I should say, the most serious contribution the League has to offer all its members is the feeling of solidarity it engenders among them. It gives a certain union to the work of professional and nonprofessional scholars in this field and makes us realize that the perpetuation of the classical tradition is due to both alike. It verifies in practise what Stanley Baldwin said in his Presidential

Address to the members of the Classical Association: "Though the lamp of classical learning must be trimmed and kept burning by the scholars, yet the light which is diffused depends to some extent on the fuel, and that is provided by an army of plain folk with conviction and enthusiasm in their hearts."<sup>2</sup> In a word, the American Classical League puts us in contact with the living classical tradition in our own country. Too many of us, I fear, look on tradition as something static. We think of it as a norm, set years ago, to which we must conform, rather than as a set of principles which we, the *ultimi Americani*, must develop to the utmost of our abilities. Tradition is not to be represented as the frozen surface of a stream in winter; it is, rather, the vibrant force of the flowing water which gathers ever more force as it rushes along. To my way of thinking, the American Classical League, with its conglomerate membership, is the visible symbol of that tradition in this country, and on that very account membership in it should be prized. It should make a great difference both to the teacher and the student of the classics to realize that the torch they are mutually bearing was lit from an ancient flame, that it has been handed on from one hand to another across the centuries, all the while diffusing its light of culture and civilization, and now is in their hands to be preserved and in time handed on for the illumination of generations as yet unborn. And finally, the League, by putting us into close union and real intellectual contact with those who are more experienced in our field as well as with those who are younger, will enable us to avoid that capital snare which Screwtape proposed to Wormwood as an infallible way to confound poor humans in every field: "And since we cannot deceive the whole human race all the time, it is important—to cut every generation off from all the others."<sup>3</sup>

*Floreat Societas ista inter scholas Catholicas*, since, as its shield proclaims, "*Tota vestra causa nostra est.*"

<sup>1</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, I, 118.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Baldwin, "The Classics and the Plain Man," (London, John Murray, 1926), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> C. S. Lewis, "The Screwtape Letters," (New York, Macmillan, 1943), p. 140.

It is a pleasure to announce the completion of *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, by Werner Jaeger. Volume II, just off the press, will be followed by Vol. III in November. "While each of the new volumes is conceived as an independent unit, taken together they will constitute a monumental integrated survey of the whole Greek cultural tradition, in the early and classical periods." Each vol. \$3.75; the set, \$10.00. Oxford University Press, New York City.

# Greek Thought on Culture as a Casualty of War

BY ROBERT P. FLYNN, S.J.

Saint Louis University

It is remarkable how rarely Greek literature dwells on war's destructive effects on culture. The explanation is to be found in the writers' aims and in the conditions under which they wrote. In the epic period, poetry wished mainly to glorify the past and its heroes, while the lyric poets of the seventh and sixth centuries sang chiefly of the beauties of nature and the joys of love and wine, or if they beat the drum, it was in a vigorous martial spirit, unconcerned with the more sombre aspects of war. Herodotus told his story with a refreshing objective interest but with little philosophic appraisal of such issues as war and peace. The great Periclean writers could scarcely afford to bemoan war's disastrous side; they were too busy reaping the rich harvest of an invigorated, national life sprung from victory over the Persians. And when a century later war-clouds loomed on the Macedonian horizon, and the Athenian orators had to shake the city from its torpor to meet the crisis, they naturally could only appeal to the noble side of war and the battle-won glories of Marathon, Plataea, and Salamis.

Nevertheless, Greek writers do bring out the evil effects of war on culture. Even Homer, who could celebrate the glory and chivalry of battle in glowing verse, must admit that war is 'mournful,' 'heart-rending,' 'horrible,' 'evil,' 'man-destroying.' There is Nestor's vigorous protest against civil war as 'inhuman, lawless, barbarous' (*Iliad* 9. 63-64)<sup>1</sup>; and Zeus' rebuke to pernicious Ares as 'most baneful of the gods' because he delights in war and strife (*Iliad* 5. 888-898); and the recurring phrase, αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐφέλκεται ἄνδρα σίδηρος, which emphasises how the lure of battle sweeps a man beyond his own control (*Odyssey* 16. 292-294, 19. 13). The *Odyssey's* whole background at Ithaca is a graphic sketch of the vices that creep in at home during the period when a nation's best are at the front "far away from their homeland".

Was Hesiod reflecting the underlying mood of his time when he made Justice and Order the sisters of Peace (*Theog.* 901-902)? Pindar (fragment 110, Schroeder) notes how war is sweet to the inexperienced but paralyzes with great fear those who have tasted its bitterness; and elsewhere (*P.* 5. 89-90) he sings of Law and Order as having no part with war. Simonides' fragment: "In good fortune a man will be good, but bad in bad,"<sup>2</sup> is a significant observation on the evil effects of misfortune in general, and is easily applicable to the great misfortune of war.

To Aeschylus, the god of war was μαιῖνων εὐσέβειαν "Ἀρης" (*Theb.* 344). Sophocles (*Antigone* 563-564) realizes how prone men's minds are to change under the shock of misfortune. Euripides, rationalist as he was, stressed the realistic side of life, and has some strong thoughts on the cultural degradation that results from war. Thus, in the *Ion* (1045-1047) we are told that reverence towards God and man (εὐσέβεια), so common in times of peace, is trampled down when vengeance on a foe becomes one's driving force. Again, the victor-

ious are always objects of ignoble envy, to the defeated (*Iph. Taur.* 352-353). One strophe in the *Phoenician Maidens* (784-800) denounces Ares and Eris as destructive of festal joys. But it is especially in his *Hecuba* that Euripides has left us the full fruit of his thoughts on how war will drag a man down to the level of the brute. The entire drama is a vivid portrayal of how motherhood, purity, loyalty, hospitality, reverence, self-control, the very dignity of human nature, are distorted and destroyed when the lives of men are flooded by the bitterness of war.<sup>3</sup>

The Peloponnesian war must have driven home to every thinking Greek the cultural decline that accompanies strife within and between nations. With that crisis came the destruction of the Periclean ideal and a marked lessening of that tremendous creative spirit, the open friendliness, the intra-Hellenic association, the striving for the highest virtues of wisdom, temperance, and justice, that had carried Athens of the fifth century to a peak of culture unscaled by any other age. Thucydides eminently realized this, as did Aristophanes and Plato. In the opening scenes of the *Laws* (625-626), Plato mentions how a state, like Sparta and Crete, whose aims and institutions look primarily toward war, is only a permanent barracks, orientated toward the lowest virtues only, and ignoring or at least insufficiently promoting the 'divine virtues,' prudence, justice, and temperance. Mercenaries especially are prone to arrogance, injustice, and insolence (630b). Even victory can be a source of moral degradation — "Victory sometimes destroys culture and education; for many men, grown insolent through victory on the field of battle, become gluttons with a thousand other evils, the fruits of their insolence (ὕβρις) (641c)." That is why every true statesman and perfect lawgiver must design his legislation for the highest good — "not war nor revolution . . . , but peace . . . and promotion of friendship" (628c. Compare also 629de).

Aristophanes, too, saw the drastic effects of war on his country's culture. Beneath the banter of his comedy can be heard the clear and unmistakable call for peace and a return of her blessings, cultural and social as well as material. This call is especially sounded, with successively increasing clarity and intensity, in the *Acharnians*, *Knights*, and *Peace*, where he longs for the mellow happiness of farm and home. In the *Knights* we are shown the populace, Demos, no longer led by honest and lettered men, but the prey of every base and bribe-devouring demagogue who steps upon the bema.<sup>4</sup> In the *Peace* Aristophanes dramatizes the return of the goddess, Eirene, at whose eviction the City had become the pallid and fear-ridden victim of unjust men, so that in their fright the citizens snatched hungrily at every morsel of calumny cast before them; a rumor of treachery was enough to insure the death of an innocent man, and popular and selfish leaders ruled the ingnorant but mighty mob (632-647). Finally, in the *Lysistrata* (411be) we see the dispersion of the family, the desolation of mothers, the broken future of the young women. Clearly, it was not in mere jest that Aristophanes hailed Peace as 'beloved of all' (*Peace* 294), 'august queen' (974), who fills men's minds with kinder thoughts (998-999), 'greatest of the goddesses' (308), whose return, so

desired by just men (556), will be the beginning of blessings for all (436).

Beyond all others, however, Thucydides felt and recorded the swift destruction of noble ideals under the dreadful forces of war. Such, indeed, was the main intent and prevailing motif of his *History*: to "set forth the vicious cycle whereby war produced suffering, suffering unrest, unrest political violence, and this violence a type of leadership which sacrificed the state to its own partisan ends,"<sup>5</sup> and to show that such will be the calamitous effects of war as long as human nature remains the same (I 22.4). Thucydides does not merely record events, he interprets and universalizes them, in order to teach future generations the inevitable social disintegration following on violence. Thus in the passage dealing with the revolution at Coreyra (III 82-84), he describes the vice and lawlessness of every kind which were bred by this political upheaval and which are the outcome of all social dissension. Partisan isolationism spread like a contagion from state to state. High motives became worthless, the character and mood of the masses tended to sink to the level of their conditions. Not only character, but language and the very meaning of words suffered a sudden reversal: recklessness was thought courage, prudence cowardice, temperance weakness. The lover of violence was trusted, the peacemaker suspected. Party obligations severed the most sacred ties of kinship. Honor, promises, oaths were forgotten in the thirst for revenge. The ignorant mob rode over the prudent and thoughtful. Power and ambition were thought the only worthwhile goals, and in the attainment of them, justice, honesty, and human feeling were pushed aside. Simple trust, so important an element in civic life, was spurned, and an attitude of hostile suspicion prevailed. In a word, every form of moral viciousness was rife.

Such is Thucydides' ominous summation of the moral and cultural evils of war, evils which his own times taught him so graphically and which he had the insight to see are the inevitable accompaniments of all social insurrection. It is no wonder that he calls peace 'the greatest of blessings' (IV 62).

The foregoing citations (which do not pretend to be exhaustive) will suffice to show that, although the anti-cultural side of war did not dominate Greek thought and literature, still it was unmistakably there. It may well point a warning to our own age, to be aware of the danger now facing our own cultural achievements, and stir us to serious efforts to minimize the threatened calamity.

<sup>1</sup> The word *athemistos* is used in Homer only here and of the savage Cyclops (*Od.* 9. 106). It is also significant that Aristophanes in the *Peace* (1096-1098) quotes these lines of Homer in his own praise of peace.

<sup>2</sup> Diehl, *Anth. Lyr. Gr.*, frg. 4, 10-11.

<sup>3</sup> For a thorough treatment of the *Hecuba* in this regard, see Patrick A. Sullivan, "A Timely Classic," *THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN*, 19 (Feb. 1943), p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> *Knight*s, 190-224, 710-723, and the whole ensuing scene.

<sup>5</sup> John H. Finley, *Thucydides* (Harv. U. Press, 1942), 305.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. John H. Finley, Jr., "Euripides and Thucydides" (*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 49 (1938), 50-51).

### "Magister, Salva Nos, Perimus!"

Eduardi Rickenbacker

*Eiusque Sociorum, Navi Aëria Undis Obruta, Viginti  
Tres Dies Mari Pacifico Peragrato, E Summo Rerum  
Discrimine Paene Desperata Liberatio.*

Caelo sub alto Pacifici Maris  
Navi vehentes aëria, scopum  
Praetervolant iam deminuto  
Fomite flammiferi liquoris.  
Pavore casus praecipitis statim  
Navis deorsum flectitur ad mare:  
Iam tangit undas, iam corusco  
Aequore Pacifico residit.  
Alata navis (nare nequit mari)  
Largas ad alas oceani subit  
Undas; aquae vis irruentis  
Navigio exitium minatur.  
Nautae paratis iam ratibus tribus  
Et fune iunctis insiliunt; manu  
Remos agunt motu citato,  
Gurgite ne capiantur, orto  
Cum tota navis mergitur aequore.  
Cibo atque rebus, quas iter exigit,  
Undis sepultis, flava mala<sup>1</sup>  
Quattuor esca manent virorum  
Octo, vagantur per mare turbidum  
Crebris procellis. Dum celerant rates,  
Die calorem, nocte frigus,  
Usque famem tolerant sitimque.  
Cum Mors propinqua est, mens validae carens  
Humanae opis spe confugit ad Deum,  
Qui passeris vitae noceri  
Absque Sua venia recusat.  
Hac spe salutis pectoribus data,  
Nautae precantur nil dubia fide:  
"Salva, Magister, Nos; Perimus!  
Des pluviam, tribuasque victum!"  
Audit petentes auxilium Deus.  
Sicut spoondit. Nubibus effluunt  
Imbres abundantes; salubres  
Pisciculi et volucris, prehensa  
Alas relaxans vertice pilei  
Vectoris, arcent morte famelicos:  
Unus tamen febri subactus  
Cum precibus tumulatur undis.  
Septem relictis naviculis tribus  
Aequor peragrant praevalido impetu  
Iam paene fracti tot malorum.  
Navibus aëriis reperti  
Oramque nacti, terrificae et minis  
Mortis refractis praesidio Dei,  
Vigore gaudentes novato  
Corda Deo retinent dicata.

<sup>1</sup> *Flava mala*, oranges.

We are glad to print Father Geyser's *alcaics* on Mr. Rickenbacker and his brave companions' recent experience in the Pacific. We wonder, though, whether the hexameter or the distich might not have proved a less refractory metre for such detailed narrative. Fr. Geyser's address: *Campion, Prairie du Chien, Wis.*

In his insistence on the need for sound subject matter Plato was enunciating a truth of the first importance and of universal application. In order to write well it is necessary to have something to say; and sound thinking as the root of all good writing was not the least of the injunctions handed down from antiquity.—J. W. H. Atkins, *Literary Criticism in Antiquity*. (Cambridge University Press, 1934), p. 59.



# The Classical Bulletin

Published monthly except July, August and September by  
St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.

Subscription price: \$1.00 a year

Entered as second-class matter, at the post-office at St. Louis 3,  
Mo., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

## EDITOR

James A. Kleist, S.J.  
St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.

## ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Francis A. Preuss, S.J. St. Stanislaus Sem'y, Florissant, Mo.  
A. A. Jacobsmeyer, S.J. St. Stanislaus Sem'y, Florissant, Mo.  
Joseph A. Walsh, S.J. Milford Novitiate, Milford, Ohio  
F. A. Sullivan, S.J. St. Andrew-on-Hudson, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.  
Francis X. Entz, S.J. Spring Hill College, Mobile, Ala.  
James E. Malone, S.J. Alma College, Alma, Cal.  
Carol L. Bernhardt, S.J. Weston College, Weston, Mass.

## BUSINESS EDITOR

Eugene R. Crewse, S. J. St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.

Vol. XX

NOVEMBER, 1943

No. 2

## Editorial

In spite of the nation's stern resolve to fight this war to a finish and, therefore, muster all the available forces to achieve this end at any cost, important groups of enlightened citizens are warning us that no war can be successfully fought, no war is in fact worth fighting for, unless the liberal arts are maintained in our schools.

A brief but clear statement to that effect was published last December by the Corporation of Yale University, recording its purpose "to safeguard the teaching efficiency and scholarly activity of its faculty of the liberal arts, in all ranks during the war years even at considerable cost."

The Corporation voices its belief that "universities and colleges are custodians of our cultural heritage." They must, therefore, "continue to give special care to those elements" in our cultural heritage "which are without immediate utilitarian purpose." The Statement closes with this ringing manifesto:

"The Corporation wishes to impress upon Yale graduates and upon the general public the danger of the impoverishment of the nation's mind and soul, should the less tangible values of our culture be allowed to shrivel while our energies are devoted to the task of winning the war to maintain them. Of what worth is freedom from want if our minds are on a lower intellectual level; or freedom from fear if we have a less cultural life to defend; or freedom of speech if we have poorer thoughts to express; or freedom of religion if we bring a less enlightened faith to the worship of God?"

Our readers have, we trust, read and pondered, among other things, the Editorial in *The Classical Journal* for June, 1943, entitled "Pass the Ammunition," which minces no words in laying bare the intentions of "the powerful Educational Policies Commission of the national Education Association." We know, therefore, what is at stake in trying to maintain classical study and teaching throughout the country.

Our leaders are awake. They know where the danger lies and are hard at work getting us 'into the fighting mood'; urging us to 'keep the home fires burning'; ex-

horting us 'to pass the ammunition.' But much more remains to be done. Outright invasion is what is needed. The war must be carried into alien territory. Missionaries set out for foreign lands to convert the pagan masses. They do not Christianize countries already Christian. So in our own case. It is not enough to read and enjoy *The Classical Outlook*, *The Classical Journal*, *Classical Weekly*, *THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN*, or any other magazine speaking to an audience already classically conscious. The great pagan mass that needs conversion is the American public which is uninterested in the classics or even directly hostile to it. It is not enough that our own cup should be full; it must overflow and irrigate minds and hearts as dry and hard as any field after a lengthy drought. Here the rank and file have a duty to perform; here each one of us has an individual task set him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For some practical ways of discharging this duty, see our Editorial for October, 1943.

## Greek and Latin Sepulchral Inscriptions

BY RICHARD LATTIMORE

Bryn Mawr College

The thousands of Greek and Latin epitaphs which have come down to us form a set of documents that fall outside of the formal literary and official traditions of the Classical Age. They represent the history of Greece and Rome almost from the beginning to the end; from the seventh century B.C. for Greek, from the third century B.C. for Latin, to the middle ages. The authors are mostly unknown amateurs; the authors and subjects alike represent all the strata of society from top to bottom, from high dignitaries of church, temple, and state to slaves, freedmen, and free workers in the humblest crafts. In greater or smaller degree the epitaphs speak for the multitude of races, cultures, and religions for which Greek and Latin were living languages. Many carry only the name, or with the name the barest essential information; others, whether in prose or verse, may run to considerable length and contain much biographical detail concerning the dead person and his survivors, or express various convictions or attitudes toward death. In verse epitaphs particularly, the influence of literary tradition may often be traced, yet even when this is the case, the composers of epitaphs frequently have contrived to speak for themselves, even though the style they used is borrowed or formulaic. Thus for the study of classical culture the epitaphs furnish a valuable supplement to the better-known materials on which our knowledge is in the main founded; and this is especially true for the attitude toward death and the belief, or disbelief, in immortality.

In general, late inscriptions are longer and more communicative than early inscriptions, and Latin more so than Greek. Even the Greek verse-epitaph is, in the early period, terse and unadorned. Latin inscriptions, on the other hand, run to greater length and ornateness in verse, to greater detail in prose.

Frequently we may trace the career of a thought or figure from its first appearance in Greek literature or epigraphy to its acceptance as a commonplace or even a formula for Latin epitaphs. It is natural that much that we find in Latin should go back to origins in the older literature. But it is too easy to overstate the imitateness of the Romans, for their epitaphs as in their literature; we find expressions or thoughts which are characteristically Roman, or even characteristically African or Gallic. Christian epitaphs, while often composed under strong influence from pagan literature and inscriptions, generally show characteristics which set them apart from the pagan tradition in Greek and Latin alike. Within these large divisions, regions and periods have styles of thought and writing which may be sharply differentiated one from another. It is thus difficult to generalize in brief compass; yet, with appropriate reservations in mind, we may offer certain general descriptions.

From many pagan epitaphs we may infer with varying degrees of probability beliefs concerning the nature of the soul and the possibility of a life after death. Sometimes we find an explicit statement that death is not the end, sometimes an explicit denial of immortality. But such definite conviction is rare. More frequently we find conditional statements (*si sunt Manes sit tibi terra levis*) or the confession of uncertainty. More often still, the general content, emotional tone, or imagery of an epitaph in which there is no direct statement will offer a not always certain clue to belief.

Such evidence may be very difficult to assess. Death, we find, is the release of the soul from the body; the thought is early, and persists. The soul is light, unsubstantial, invisible, airy; it is compared to smoke or shadow; it rises to the sky. These descriptions do not imply that, because the soul is different from the body, it is therefore immortal. Another puzzling type of belief is offered in those inscriptions, mostly in verse, which make use of the supernatural death-figures of pagan antiquity—Hades, Persephone, and Hermes, the rivers of the underworld, the Happy Islands, and Elysium. At one extreme these may represent belief in the existence of such divinities and such places; at the other extreme, we may have nothing more than conscious decoration inspired by the commonplaces of poetry, names whose content has faded. And to judge from the type of sepulchral poem in which such names are found, the second hypothesis will more often be the right one.

We have better evidence for some belief in immortality where the divinities are in some form the dead themselves, or where the dead are subjects of a cult. The *hero* in Greek, the *Manes* in Latin inscriptions seem to stand for a living belief in survival. Again, where we find references to the cult of the tomb, the offering of sacrifice, libations, or flowers, or the anniversary *rosalia*, we seem to have something more than fancy, or poetical imagination; and the same is true when we find (significantly enough, this is mostly in *prose* epitaphs) a strong feeling that the tomb is a sacred place, generally expressed through the invocation of curses on anyone who violates its sanctity. The mention of the *hero* or the *Manes* may shrink to formula and represent a desiccated convention, the tendence and sanctity of the tomb may

represent only a kind thought or a spirit of exclusiveness; yet it is in the idea of the sacred dead in the tomb that the conviction of immortality, vague and ill-defined but often powerful, is best represented.

On the other hand, the tone of a far greater number of epitaphs suggests that death was felt to be the ultimate evil which permitted no further hope. In the contrast of death with the memory of life, in the many strains of unreserved lamentation over eternal loss and separation, in the protests leveled against fate, we may infer an underlying feeling of hopelessness. Even desire for death may be nothing but a longing for annihilation and for release from the unhappiness of life.

There is also a large and important group of inscriptions in which either the dead or the survivor is offered consolation. The consolatory themes may be general or particular. Mourning is useless, and will not bring the dead back; death comes to all. Or again, fame or memory will endure forever, though life is gone; the splendor of the tomb, or its proximity to the wayside, brings some thought of the dead to the mind or the lips of the passing stranger who reads the name. It is interesting that some important consolatory themes are first found in the work of the deeply pessimistic Euripides. For consolations such as these are a sad business, bare comfort offered to replace a rejected belief in immortality.

Thus, while we have little in the way of direct statement, we find that relatively few pagan epitaphs give evidence of any strong belief in an afterlife. Those, far more numerous, in which we find lamentation or consolation, force us to believe that the majority of the articulate felt that death was final.

In addition to the interpretation of death, we also find in the epitaphs much interesting material for the study of private life in antiquity. Particularly in Latin inscriptions of the Empire, we find a considerable amount of biographical material, with some interesting evidence concerning the family and the relations between masters and servants. Likewise, in the reiterated praise of the dead we may find much that is of interest concerning the standards according to which persons were judged by those who knew them.

I have been speaking thus far of pagan inscriptions. Christian epigraphy is really a separate field. It is interesting to note, however, that much of pagan imagery, and even pagan thought, survives in Christian inscriptions, particularly in verse-epitaphs. The result is at times confusing, as when pagan divinities appear; but this may mostly be set down to a tendency to borrow, sometimes unwarily, the commonplaces of classical poetry. We find little of the sort in the less ornate prose epitaphs. Side by side with the classical inheritance, Christianity introduced its own figures, symbols, and style, as well as a fresh appraisal of character. In the interpretation of death and in the resultant feeling about death, the change effected by the new faith is unmistakably apparent.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [There is an excellent review, in *Classical Weekly* (March 15, 1943), of Dr. Lattimore's dissertation, "Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs," The University of Illinois Press, 1942. \$3.50. Ed. Note.]

## Straight Shooting in Latin Defense, II

RAYMOND V. SCHODER, S.J.

University of Detroit High School

How, then, does Latin serve as a necessary tool to the achievement of the education which we have sketched, so that other studies, though also indispensable in their own way, cannot supply the full desired result without Latin?

First of all, toward attaining that self-effectuation, that development, discipline, and direction of all the faculties which constitutes humane culture, Latin is clearly a very effective instrument. It simultaneously works upon the whole man, with a touch virile and dominating in its strength, yet gentle, careful, and fostering in its artistic refinement. This can be seen from the way it trains each of the faculties in question.

Latin exercises the *intellect* by the facts it presents, the problems of thought and theory it proposes, the reflections of great minds upon the manifold aspects of life, thus offering eternally true and worthwhile thoughts on all our interests, occupations, and problems. It trains to accurate observation by requiring habitual attention to the discrimination of parts of a highly inflected language, and to the subtle distinctions latent in its complexity of syntactical organization. Latin grammar is an unsurpassed field for exercise in concrete logic, for, of all languages offered for our study, it is the most thoroughly rationalized, the most fully moulded by logical laws down to the last corner of its being. It is a model of orderliness, a revelation of the interconnection of ideas and of the laws of thought. Latin offers innumerable opportunities for applying principles to facts, and thereby awakens and promotes the habit of abstract and universal thinking. Composition exercises and translation call into operation the analytic and synthetic functions of the mind, by countless acts of comparing words, discriminating meanings and forms, selecting, appraising, judging, inferring, and rearranging words according to a clearly foreconceived rational pattern.

Now, Latin exercises the intellect in all this in a special way which other studies do not assure. It *forces* the student to analyse his thought, as uninflected English with its lazy word order, does not, and to a degree not approached by any of the modern languages, even German. Nothing brings the sheer anatomy of thought into clearer mental focus than the analytical<sup>1</sup> study of Latin. No less a thinker than Einstein has proclaimed: "Latin is superior to any modern language for developing the power to think." Moreover, the mental discipline given by mathematics is no substitute for that bestowed by Latin, for in Latin study the mind is not only exercised in precise thought, but it is made to do this on *humane* material—the great thoughts and ideals of a noble literature and the various deeper aspects of human life—not on impersonal numbers and abstract quantities. Hence, Latin gives not merely cold-blooded discipline of mind, but a mind-training in the fullest and richest sense, a mind exercised on fine cultural and humane material. Now, this is precisely the material that is most open to general educative influence on later life, as it is the most subject to transfer of training. For the laws

of that much-investigated process show that while *specific* operations are not carried over to activities of any different sort, *fundamental* operations basic to many activities (and of these Latin study is full) do emerge more perfect in later activities if exercised in earlier ones. Thus, the young habit of Prudence, i. e., practical intelligence or the consistent right use of means to a right end, which is developed by the solving of problems of thought and principle such as those met in Latin authors, will carry over and be of value throughout life, especially as it has been exercised from the start on life-problems, not merely mathematical formulae. And will not the young mind be stimulated by its contact with fine thought to be itself intensely curious about things, to be hungry for knowledge and conscious of its own inward poverty which only protracted study can mitigate?<sup>2</sup> Again, students remember longer the thought of Latin writers, for the very need of slowly working out a literary passage because written in a difficult tongue makes the thought-content more impressive than in easily-run-over English authors, and also because there is often an intellectual thrill of sudden discovery, as a complex piece of Latin finally yields to analysis and its meaning bursts fully on the view: Θάλασσα, Θάλασσα.

Secondly, the *will* is cultivated by Latin studies, not merely to diligence, perseverance, patience, and concentration, as with any difficult study, but also by the ideals, motives, and examples of conduct set forth for the will's instruction and training. Latin exercises the will in forming resolutions on many problems of human life, by the situations in which others are placed before one in literature, and the experiences into which one is led by proxy. Classical literature fosters, to an unusual degree, an interest in and appreciation for things of the soul, by persistently showing man to be more than mere animal or machine, and lifting the mind above modern materialistic values to a taste for beauty, truth, and virtue. The nobility of Roman ideals, in general, is often more impressive than that reflected in modern literatures, because commended by its self-evident rightness, and showing that even independently of Christian Revelation, moral conduct is the key to true happiness, by its very nature.

Here lies the real contribution of classical studies to education for democracy. Their stress on the basic dignity of human nature, on the individual's personal rights, freedom to pursue his sublime destiny, and true greatness based on his spiritual soul, are more fundamentally protective of democratic ideals than a course in Civics. The classics are *humanities*, making Americans more fully human, perfecting the individual (and thereby the society and state of which he is a part), and giving him a personal, rational understanding of the higher values of life, such as true Democracy seeks to preserve. Science, on the other hand, is largely barren of ethical example and inspiration. Moreover, "the cult of the beautiful, when carried out in a healthy, virile way, is the most social of all trainings. It is a training for unselfishness. . . . The coarse person uses things. He has nothing to give. He only grabs and takes. The 'humane' personality (without affectation, of course) gives to everything he does a finish, a touch of perfection which are a joy to himself, and to all those who live with



him. . . . The moment a man starts to beautify something, in that very instant he has ceased to be selfish."<sup>3</sup>

The *imagination* is cultivated by Latin through colorful, vivid, stimulating concepts, images, and descriptions. This is true only in a much less degree of science,<sup>4</sup> history, and other studies. And English literature, though also splendidly effective to this end, is often less dynamic in its imaginative influence, less fully controlled by reason and the intrinsic merits of the object, and more likely to impress the young as artificial and conventional.

As a *memory-trainer*, Latin is rated among the very best by experimental psychologists; and the fact that it exercises the memory on thought-units and humanistic material is a benefit which many items of the curriculum cannot presume to promise.

The *emotions*, too, are cultivated and refined by Latin literature, through the wide variety of experiences portrayed, and the deep but unsentimental reaction to beauty and emotional occasions which it reflects and impresses on the reader's soul. The sonorous beauty of the Latin language and the artistic merits of Latin literature also foster valuable aesthetic development. English literature is in general overromantic, less disciplined by reason in its emotions, and is often (especially in the pieces traditionally studied in high school) inescapably sentimental.<sup>5</sup> At any rate, the wholly different emotional and imaginative tone of Latin literature is a valuable stabilizing influence and a new experience.

Latin, clearly, can contribute many things, some of them all its own, to the attainment of that general culture of the faculties which education primarily implies. Like all great literature, it is a mirror of life, teaching us human nature, and therefore ourselves; it introduces one to real and fictitious characters who will have a vital influence on one's mind and life. It is, together with Greek, the most perfect and impressive embodiment of the humanistic spirit, presenting the ideal type of natural culture, the type which is necessarily eternal and universal, nearest the rounded completion of human nature as God made it to be, as the basis for a full supernatural culture built thereon by Grace. The modern literatures, for all their admirable humanistic value, are not as inescapably, as concentratedly, humanistic as the classics; and only both together can give the fullest results. Latin, then, deserves to be studied for its own sake, as a great literature enshrining noble monuments of the human spirit too precious to ignore.

An educated *background* of facts and experience is a further result of Latin studies. They introduce us to the persons and influences which lie at the roots of our own higher civilization. They put us, so to speak, 'on the ground floor' of modern culture, giving that insight into the historical growth and remote causes of our cultural inheritance which are indispensable for its understanding and just appreciation. They give us an intimate, inside knowledge of so many of the finest things that have been bequeathed to us. By their light, a thousand facts of modern life and literature are seen in their origins, their full meaning, and true perspective. We lose our narrow-minded presumption that all the best things are the newest, that all history revolves around the era of scientific progress, and gain a humbler, a wiser, estimation of our own world. As Santayana has said; "The

merely modern man never knows what he is about. A Latin education, far from alienating us from our own world, teaches us to discern the amiable traits in it, and the genuine achievements; helping us, amid so many distracting problems, to preserve a certain balance and dignity of mind, together with a sane confidence in the future." Latin has been, historically, the principle of continuity and the channel of civilization from Greece to our modern world<sup>6</sup>, and no man to whom it is alien and a mystery can ever put his fingers on a major determinant of Western culture<sup>7</sup>. The broadening of outlook and interests and cultural insight which results from an intimate contact with classical literature cannot be matched by any other single study. Not only does English literature not provide a substitute, but it is itself largely incomprehensible except on the surface without a solid classical background. Are we to make American youth orphans of all this? If so, are we still to term them educated?

*Mastery of speech*, the final ingredient of our educational ideal, is particularly fostered by Latin study. Paradoxically, one can learn more English grammar and style from Latin than from English. The very nature of Latin forces the mind, as uninflected English can never do, to perceive the interrelations and distinctive functions of the various parts of speech. The agreement in number, gender, and case of modifiers with their antecedents, even occasionally on a deeper than grammatical basis (such as with words of a gender differing from that of their form, e.g., *boni agricolae*), brings in on the mind the logical relations of these words in a way impossible in English, and superior by far to French or German. The fine discrimination of moods and tenses in Latin forces on the mind a clearer understanding of the precise function of verb-forms, and the unified subordination of clauses into an organically integrated sentence wonderfully trains in clarity of thought. Unity, coherence, and emphasis — the principles of all good expression — are nowhere so manifest and so edifying an example to the young writer as in Latin models. In analysing, or still better in writing, a Latin periodic sentence, the student is compelled to scrutinize the whole range of thought, often in English extending over several sentences, and discover that single pivotal idea therein about which all the rest revolves. In other words, he may no longer hurry over the thought, giving each clause about the same emphasis (or lack of it!) as he is tempted to do in English. Take this example from the *Gallic War*: the English would run this: "Caesar saw through the motive that dictated these words. However, as his preparations for a campaign in Britain were complete, he was not willing to waste the winter among the Treveri. So he sent word to Indutiomarus to report with two hundred hostages." What is the basic idea here? What is the strict logical pattern of thought? The Latin period, as Caesar wrote it, makes this lucidly evident: *Caesar, etsi intellegebat qua de causa ea dicerentur, tamen, ne aestatem in Treveris consumeret, omnibus ad Britannicum bellum comparatis Indutiomarus ad se cum ducentis obsidibus venire iussit*. Clearly, the student who is subjected to this form of sentence analysis will soon lose his habit of loosely organized, sprawling, and abruptly juxtaposed writing. He will have to aban-

don tying his thoughts together in the haphazard way they come to mind, and pause till he has a comprehensive grasp of the whole idea before attempting to express it.

Translation will force him to get a clear, distinct grasp of the ideas before putting them into the other language, will make him penetrate to the inner meaning of the words and their precise function in the context, balance synonyms and idioms delicately for their connotation as well as denotation, and search attentively, with ever more refined taste, throughout the language in his eternal pursuit of the one and only word that will precisely convey the whole meaning. This will result in a constantly augmented English vocabulary and sense of idiom, an ever deeper understanding of the root meanings and history of English words, a richer complex of idea-associations or 'background' to vernacular words, a more colorful and vital understanding of their full meaning. This will give the student that mastery of words as such which is the essential basis of all superior style. It will do this, not at second hand, but by bringing him back to the *sources* of English words and style, thereby allowing him to start out from the sources directly, to develop his own style independently, from first-hand intimacy with those masterpieces which are confessedly the models and inspiration of so many great English stylists, thus preserving him from excessive dependence on secondary models, and safeguarding his originality. French and German are too similar in structure and spirit to English to afford a comparable stimulation, and are much more open to the danger of foreignizing one's diction and producing a Gallicized or Germanicized English. And they are generally inferior to Latin's admirable sobriety and restraint, its dignified symmetry and inexuberance, its artistically disciplined vigor which are so beneficial for chastening and stabilizing one's English style, exposed as it is to the bad influence of the frequently excessive Romanticism in the English tradition, of careless and sensational modern journalism, and (not to be forgotten) the funny-papers. In short, Latin is still a precious, if not indispensable, influence for moulding a superior English style — provided it is used with attention to the spirit of its style more than the letter, and with proper concomitant use of suitable English models.

And here we may close with a devastating blow from our secret weapon, reserved for the knock-out. For Catholic educational purposes at least, Latin is an undeniable desideratum. It is the key which opens the grand and inspiring palace of the Church's liturgy, and of nearly its whole treasury of great religious and philosophical writings. To the proposal of teaching Catholic youth a reading knowledge of Latin for these purposes there simply can be no legitimate dissent.

Latin is not the whole of education. Its merits are not to be established by a narrow-minded depreciation of other studies; these are also valuable, in varying degrees even indispensable, to a rounded education today. They have benefits to offer which Latin cannot give in the same way or measure. But neither are they suited to take the place of Latin, for this too has special functions which they cannot fill. My point is that we cannot

reasonably leave Latin out of our educational program. The solidity, alertness, and superior efficiency of Latin students in other classes, such as teachers of English, History, and Philosophy are always remarking, will corroborate this assertion.

Now that we have given a demonstration (*adumbrasse sufficiat!*) of our big guns in Latin defense, it will hardly be necessary to resort to the small bird-shot of utilitarian arguments ("Latin is such a help toward understanding scientific terminology, building-dedications, etc.") and of extraneous allurements like Roman teas. Still, it may be worth while to keep even these weapons loaded, for use on a certain type of sceptic to whom they seem impressive, and on whom it would be a shame to waste our heavier ammunition.

The strategy I have here proposed reduces, then, to a simple formula: shoot straight at the mark, neither below nor above; and use your big guns! Once people properly conceive the ideal of education, and how Latin fits into it as a tried, efficient, and in some ways unequalled instrument, they will surrender to the objective truth and give up the fight. For in the face of clear evidence there is, in Lucretius' phrase, only one alternative: *manus dandum est*.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See R. J. Henle, S.J., *CLASSICAL BULLETIN*, Oct. 1939.

<sup>2</sup> See Jaime Castiello, S.J., *A Humane Psychology of Education* (New York, Sheed and Ward, 1936), p. 177. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Compare Darwin's own testimony of his loss of aesthetic taste from exclusive preoccupation with science: "Up to the age of 30 or beyond it, poetry of many kinds . . . gave me great pleasure . . . But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry; I have tried recently to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have almost lost my taste for pictures and music . . . My mind seems to have become a machine for grinding general laws out of a large collection of facts; but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive." (*Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, Vol. 1, p. 81).

<sup>5</sup> By sentimental, I mean that the feelings are deliberately and forcibly aroused beyond the natural emotional significance of the object contemplated; or in another form, the subordination of intellect and imagination in art to the position of mere means for exciting an intense emotional mood sought for its own sake, as taking precedence over the vision of objective reality at which art should primarily aim.

<sup>6</sup> See the leaflet of F. P. Donnelly, S.J., *Latin — the Channel of Our Civilization* (reprinted in his *Literature, the Leading Educator*, Longmans, Green & Co., 1938; 88-95).

<sup>7</sup> This point has been finely stated by Walter Lippmann, in calling for the study of classical and medieval philosophy and literature: "During the last 40 or 50 years, those who are responsible for education have progressively removed from the curriculum of studies the Western culture which produced the modern democratic state. The schools and colleges have, therefore, been sending out into the world men who no longer understand the creative principle of the society in which they must live. Deprived of their cultural tradition, the newly educated Western men no longer possess in the form and substance of their own minds and spirits the ideas, the premises, the rationale, the logic, the method, the values, or the deposited wisdom which are the genius of the development of Western civilization. The prevailing education is destined, if it continues, to destroy Western civilization, and is in fact destroying it." (*New York Herald Tribune*, Dec. 29, 1941).

<sup>8</sup> Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 2.1129; cp. 2.1043.

The Post-Office Department states that delivery of mail to St. Louis University will be expedited if addressed as follows: St. Louis (3), Mo. Also kindly let us know your own zone number, to insure a prompt delivery of *THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN*.



X

n.  
in  
h,  
ill

se  
ly  
li-  
er-  
ns,  
as.  
ns  
ey  
to

to  
oe-  
ole  
tin  
in-  
ive  
ear  
er-

ca-  
93.  
ste  
30  
ure  
of  
d it  
my  
ome  
of  
part  
not  
31).  
tely  
nce  
ion  
ans  
ake,  
nich

anel  
du-

, in  
and  
oon-  
icu-  
lern  
een  
the  
De-  
tern  
own  
ogic,  
the  
vail-  
tern  
erald

of  
ssed  
now  
y of